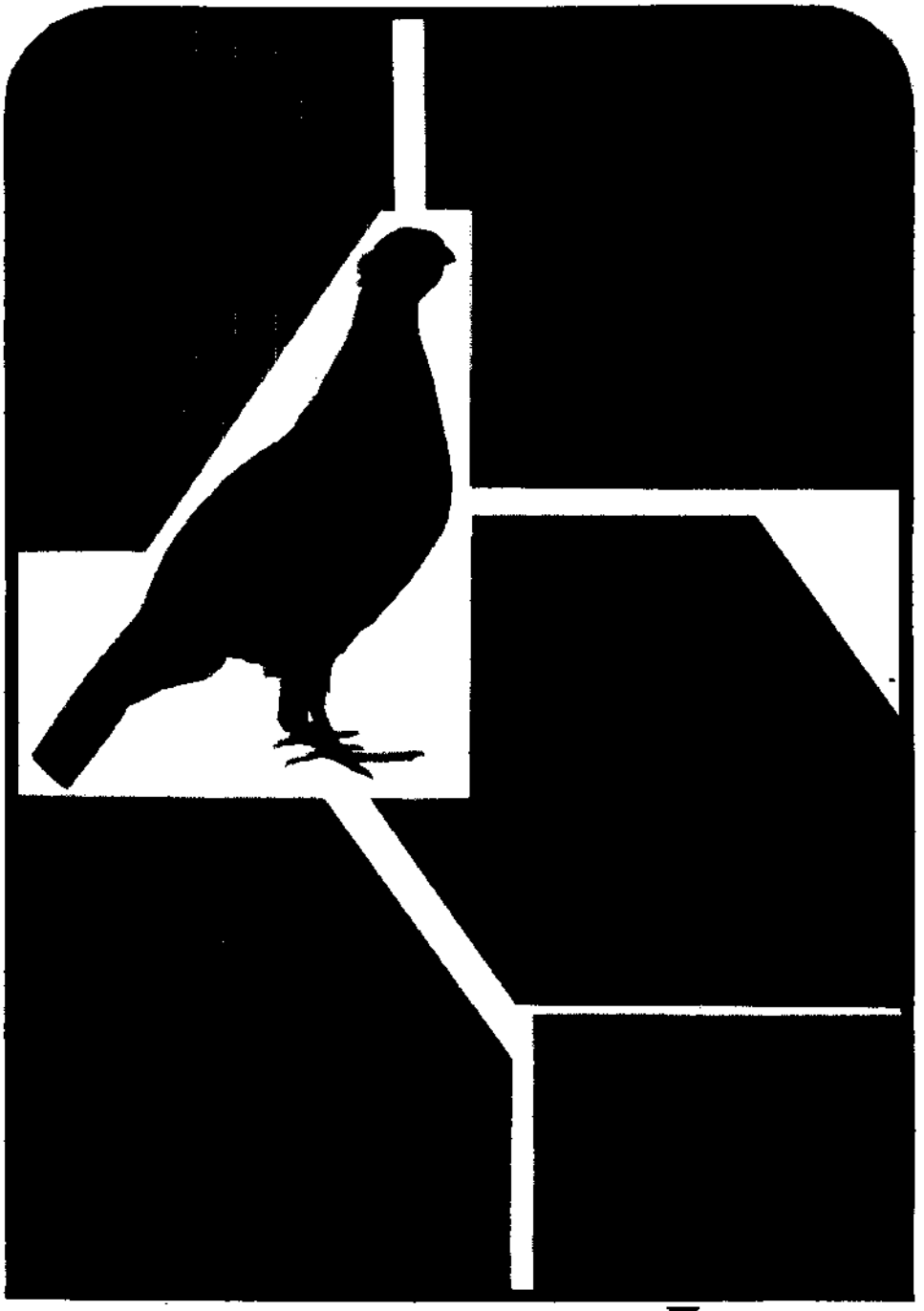


Game Birds of Washington

UPLAND GAME BIRDS OF WASHINGTON

Washington State has an abundance of upland game bird species that few states can match. With variations in climate and vegetation, Washington has suitable habitat for six native grouse species, five species of quail, four pheasant varieties, Merriam's wild turkey, two partridge species, dove, Wilson's snipe, and band-tailed pigeons. From the deserts of eastern Washington to alpine Cascade meadows, to Olympic Peninsula's rain forests, upland birds in the Evergreen State offer sport and enjoyment to hunter and non-hunter alike.

Little is known of native Pacific Northwest upland birds prior to the journeys of Lewis and Clark who, in 1805, explored what is now Washington State. Since no ornithologist accompanied the expedition, the few references to upland birds in their journals concern game obtained to augment their diet. This game was often broadly identified as "grouse" or "prairie hens."

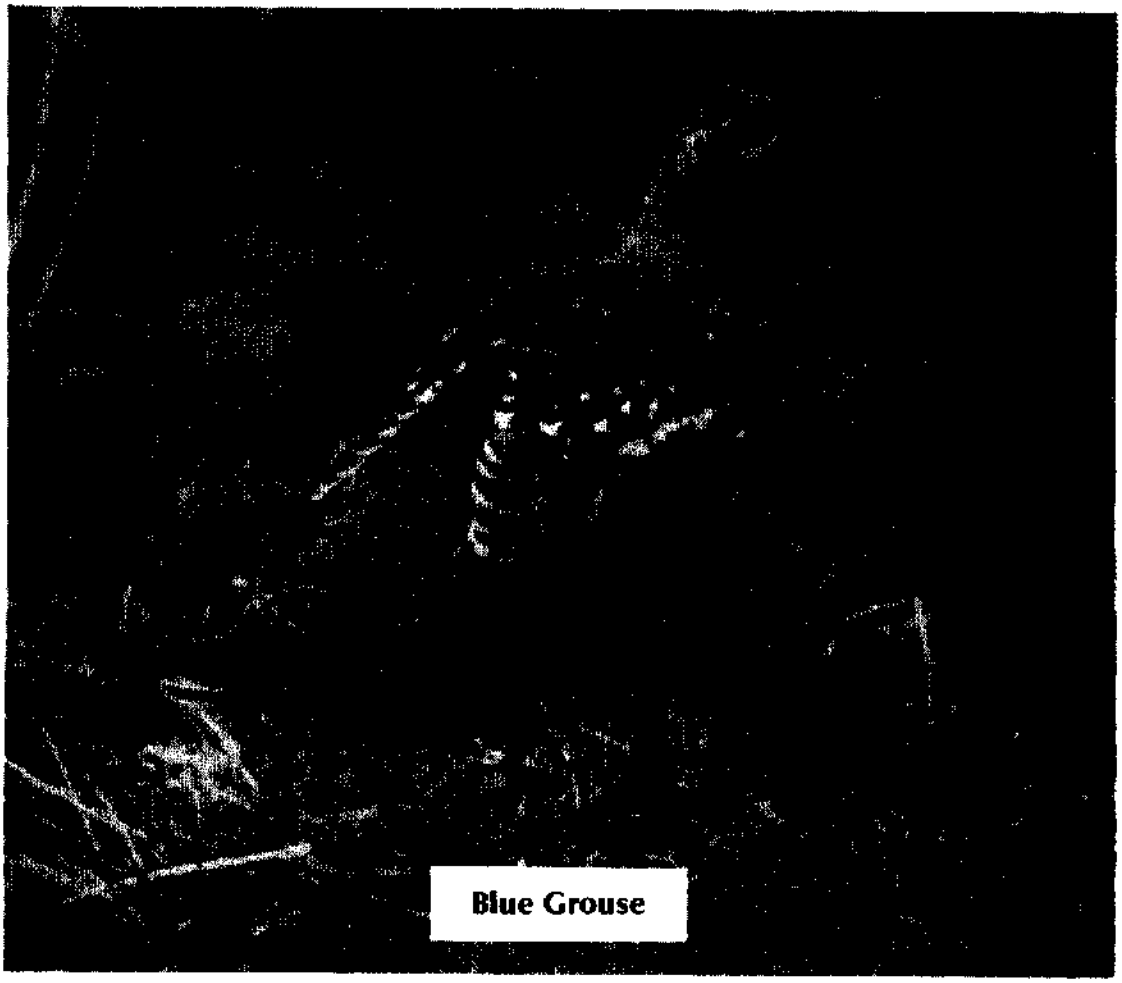
Lewis and Clark are generally credited with being the first to discover and identify sharp-tailed grouse in Washington, which they described as "an inhabitant of the Great Plains of the Columbia." They also found sage grouse, which they called "Cock of the Plains" and occurred in "great abundance" in parts of eastern Washington; "black and white" or spruce grouse; and "small brown" or ruffed grouse.

Naturalist J. K. Townsend reported that on an 1834 expedition in Washington ". . . we found these birds (sage grouse) so numerous in some places that at times we even made use of our riding whips to prevent them from being trodden to death by our horses." He also mentioned that sharp-tailed grouse were noted on the lower Columbia River in the plains region around the now present sites of Portland and Vancouver.

Two other naturalists, Peal and Pickering, who accompanied the Northwest Wilkes Expedition during 1838 to 1842, also found ruffed and blue grouse common, as well as sharptails and "Cock of the Plains." They collected sage grouse specimens on the "plains of the Walla Walla river."

In the original journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition, published in 1904, William Clark gives a very careful description of a mountain quail. This bird and two other specimens were collected in April of 1806 near Beacon Rock, along the Columbia River. One specimen was skinned completely and the plumage taken back with the expedition to Washington, D.C.

In *Birds of Washington State* by Jewett, Taylor, Shaw and Aldrich, it is stated that both the valley and mountain quail are native to parts of Washington. Bent, however, in *Life Histories of North American Gallinaceous Birds* says unequivocally that the mountain quail is not a Washington native, but was brought from California between the years of 1880 and 1890. In any case, mountain quail are now found in several parts of the state.



Blue Grouse

The California, or valley quail, is also said by Bent to have been introduced into Washington as early as 1857 when two shipments were brought from California and released in the Puget Sound vicinity. This sporty bird appears to have been the first upland game bird successfully introduced into Washington which is currently hunted.

Three factors determine almost entirely the successful introduction of imported game birds. First, necessary habitat must exist; second, healthy, sufficiently-wild and prolific broodstock must be used; and third, birds must be released into their new surroundings in enough numbers to withstand normal losses from rigors of seasonal climatic variations and depredation. Matching potential release site habitat with the bird's native homeland is the most difficult task, but when the three basic needs are satisfied, success is more probable.

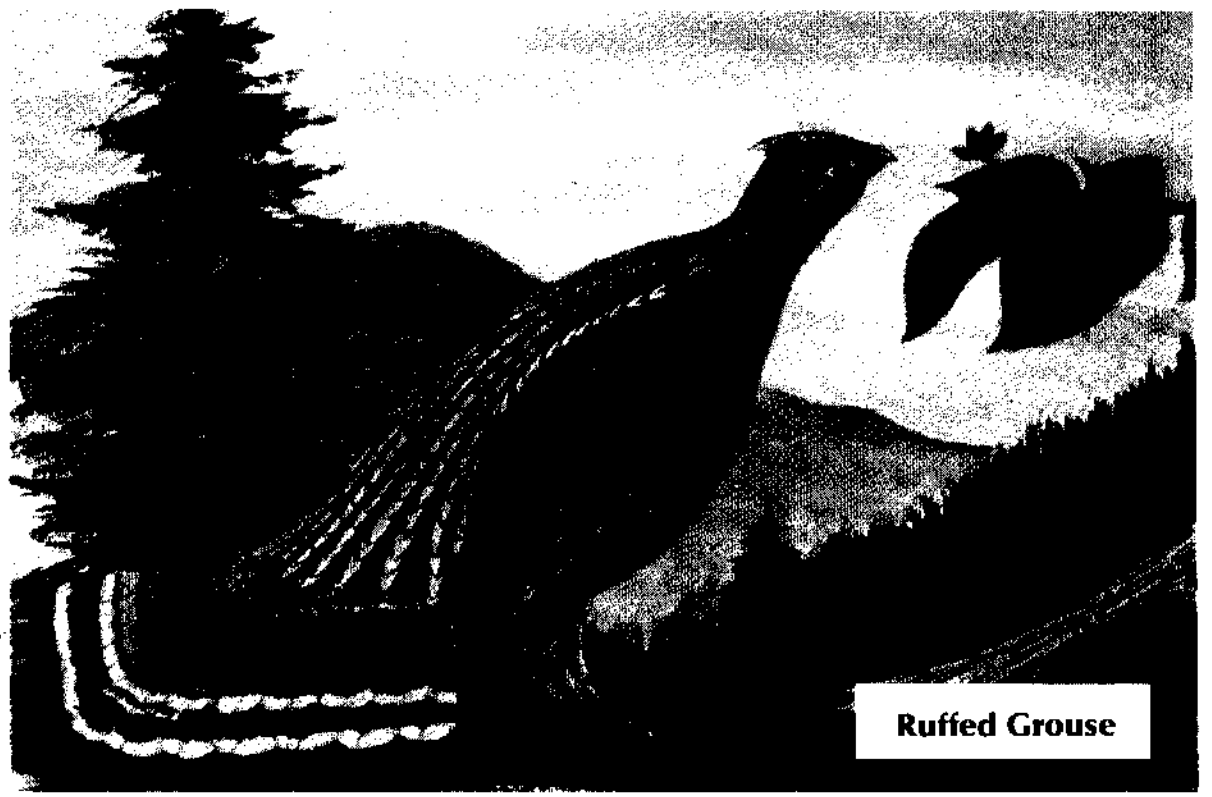
NATIVE SPECIES

The grouse family in Washington provides a variety of species ranging from open sagebrush areas in central Washington to Tamarack and Engelmann spruce regions of high mountain ranges. An open season is allowed each year on blue, ruffed, spruce, sharp-tailed and sage grouse. The ptarmigan, of "snow grouse", is not presently hunted. All these birds are native Washingtonians, although they differ in habitat requirements.

Ruffed Grouse

Bonasa umbellos

(Length 16-19")



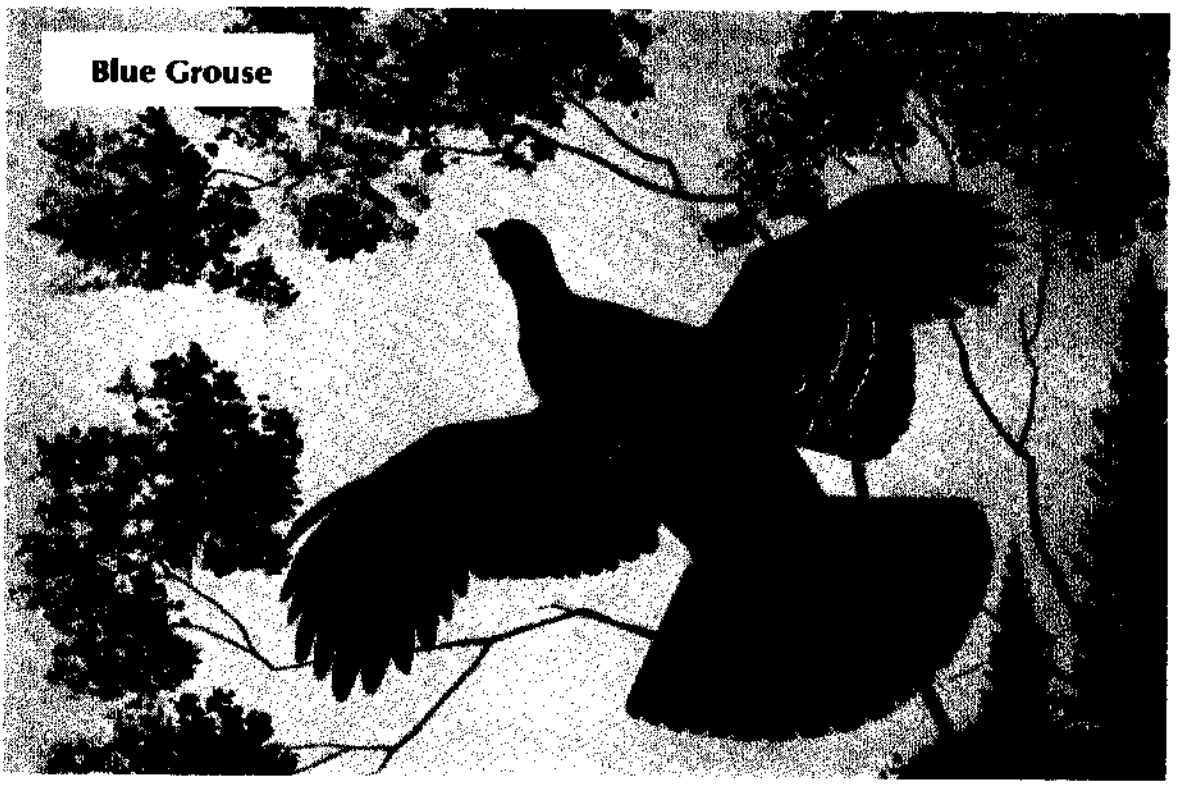
Ruffed grouse, or "native pheasant" as they are often called, are found statewide in lowland timber, along old logging roads, in alder thickets and in brushy stream bottom areas. Many hunters glimpse ruffed grouse only fleetingly as he darts around one thicket of brush to the safety of another.

In western Washington the ruffed grouse is reddish brown in appearance with a black band at the end of the tail. In the grayish eastern Washington color phase, some brown tones are variously replaced with gray. All males sport a head crest and a black ruff on either side of the neck.

Blue Grouse

Dendraqapus obscurus

(Length 15½-21")



Largest of the forest grouse is the blue grouse, found on both sides of the Cascades in higher elevation coniferous forests. Like the ruffed, the blue grouse comes in two color phases, depending upon which side of the Cascades he is found. Ruffed and blue grouse, combined, make up the majority of grouse taken in Washington.

The blue grouse is nearly all dark gray with slate blue underparts. In the male, white is found on the sides of the neck and flanks, and a light gray band borders the tip of the black tail. The female is smaller and more mottled in color.

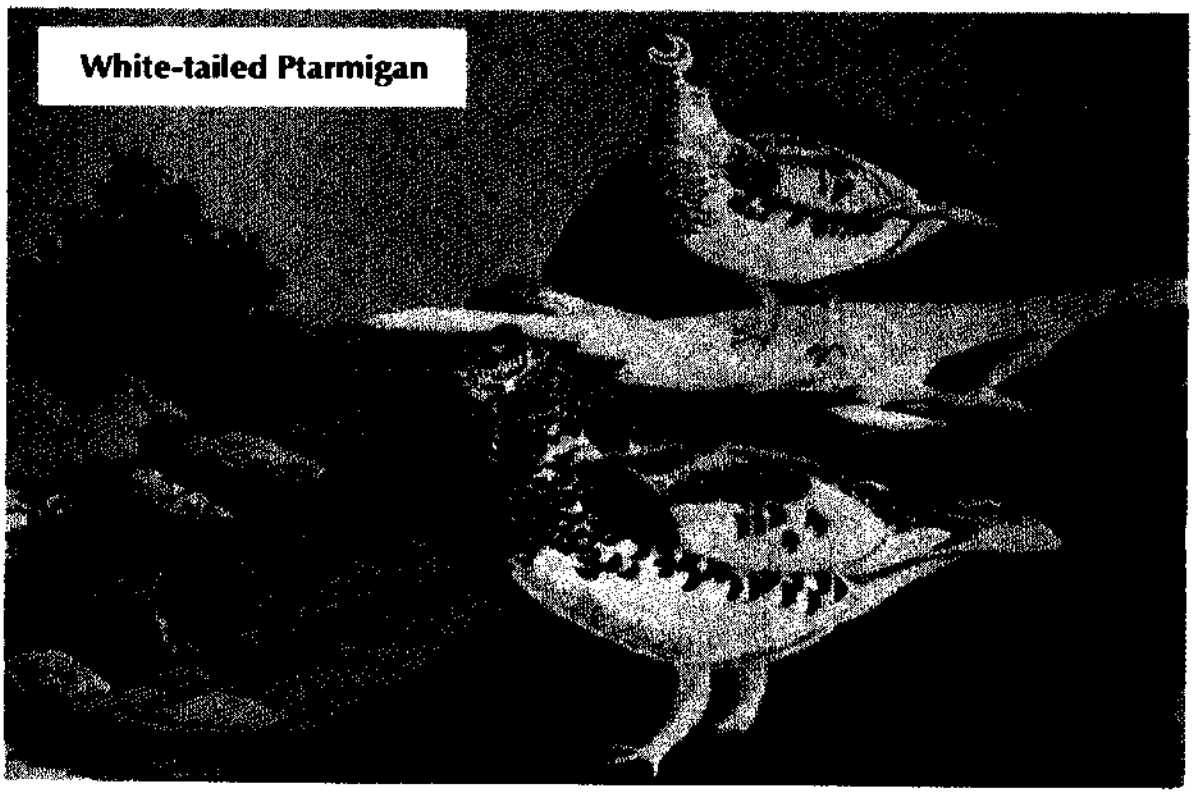
White-tailed Ptarmigan

Lagopus leucurus

(Length 12-13")

White-tailed ptarmigan is the only Washington grouse not hunted, due to its limited numbers and general inaccessibility of habitat. Found in the high Cascades, Olympics and the Selkirk range of Pend Oreille county, the ptarmigan is about the size of the more familiar ruffed grouse. It is one of the handsomest and most approachable bird species found in the higher elevations, and is often seen by summer hikers.

Ptarmigan stay at the highest Cascade elevations year-round. Barren pumice slopes, with their glare of light, freezing winds, dwarfed vegetation, and extensive snow and ice fields furnish ptarmigan with congenial surroundings. Here it finds ample food and shelter for its needs during most of the year, retreating to protected forested areas only when forced to do so by overwhelming storms of winter.



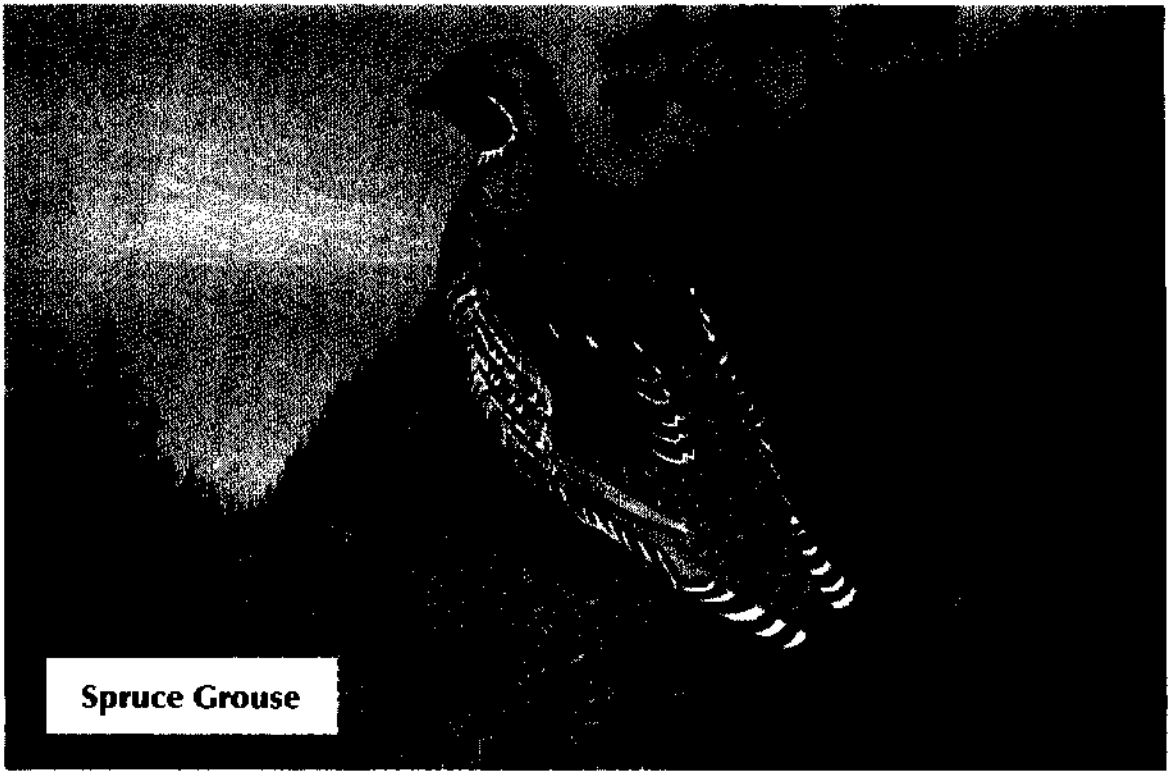
The ptarmigan is the only Washington bird to undergo an entire color change annually to enable it to adapt to changing habitat conditions. In summer both male and female ptarmigan are colored variegated black, white and buff, while in winter they sport a pure white coat of feathers. As in all grouse species, legs and feet are entirely feathered.

Spruce Grouse

Canachites canadensis

(Length 15-17")

The spruce grouse, or Franklin grouse, is smaller than the blue grouse, but considerably more colorful. Sometimes called the "fool hen" because of its apparent absence of fear of humans, spruce grouse can often be seen sitting in trees along a trail. This grouse inhabits lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce regions of the Cascades, Olympics and mountainous areas in northeastern Washington.



Spruce Grouse

The male Franklin grouse has brown upper parts heavily barred with black, and a tail with white spots at the base. Back sides are strikingly barred with white and an orange patch is visible over the eye. As with all forest grouse, the female is smaller, more brownish in color and has some barring in blackish-brown tones.

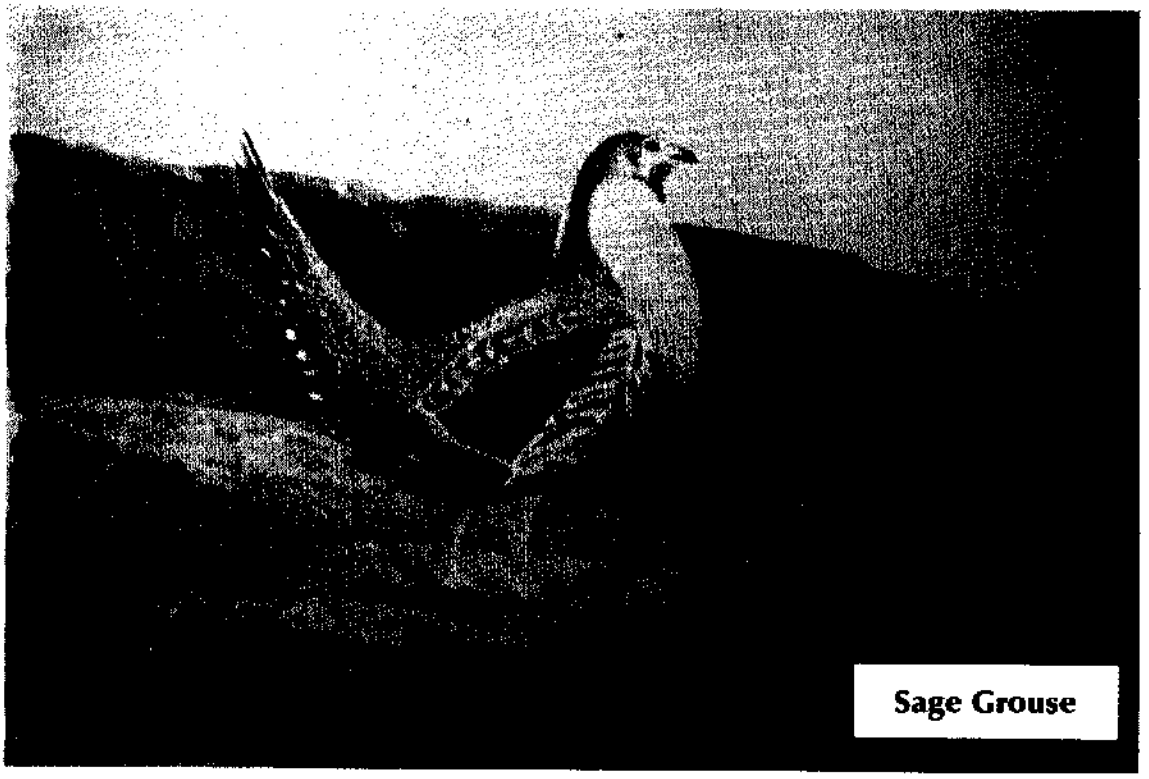
Sage Grouse

Centrocercus urophasianus

(Length, male 26-30")

The sage grouse is the largest native grouse and ranks second only to wild turkey in size of upland game birds. It is a flatland bird, peculiar to sagebrush, semi-arid regions of the Northwest. It was abundant along the Columbia River plains early in the 19th century. As late as the early 1900's large flocks occurred near Ellensburg and Wenatchee. The sage grouse is now confined principally to eastern Kittitas, eastern Yakima, Grant, Douglas and Lincoln counties. Encroaching agricultural needs and sagebrush removal projects have had an adverse effect on these impressive game birds.

The male sage grouse is a speckled grayish brown bird with a whitish throat and breast. It has long, spike-like tail feathers which are black, tipped with white. The female is smaller and has a shorter tail. The sex of sage grouse can be identified in flight, even from a long distance. The male flies with a characteristic rocking motion, but the female cruises in level flight.



Sage Grouse

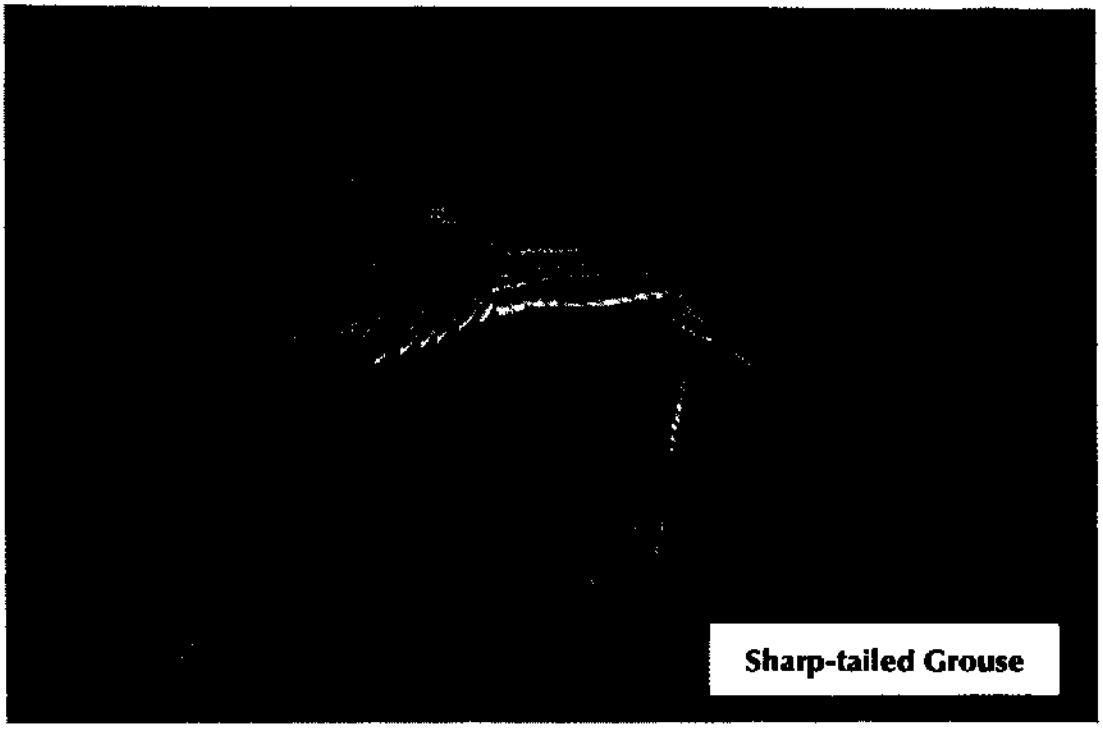
Sharp-tailed Grouse

Pedioecetes phasianellus

(Length 15-20")

The sharp-tailed grouse was originally abundant throughout open timber and grassland areas of eastern and central Washington. Today, however, its numbers are greatly limited and they are found principally in the grassland regions of Lincoln, Okanogan and northern Douglas counties. Primarily a prairie-type bird, sharptails are not found at higher elevations. They were protected in Washington for more than 20 years prior to 1953 when limited hunting seasons were begun.

The sharptail is a pale gray and brown grouse, heavily spotted with dark browns and blacks. The pale brown breast is covered with dark "V" shaped markings. As its name implies, the short tail is definitely pointed.



Sharp-tailed Grouse

While different species of grouse display variations in mannerisms, as a whole they are noted for the strutting and "show-off" antics performed during the mating season. Cocks bow, dance, and strut about waiting females. Males spread their plumage and thrust out their feathered chests.

All grouse species have inflatable air sacks which are prominently displayed on each side of their neck during the courtship ritual. Grouse are not alone in these mating acrobatics, but perhaps are most commonly and easily observed. Habitual strutting grounds of both sage and sharptail grouse are important to survival of these species. Destruction of sage brush and native grasses have caused declines in prairie grouse species.

Also unique to the grouse family is the fact that they are "budders." All subsist almost entirely upon a diet of buds and leaves from the various shrubs, trees and other plants found in their particular habitat. They are not dependent upon seeds and cereal grains needed by pheasants and quail.

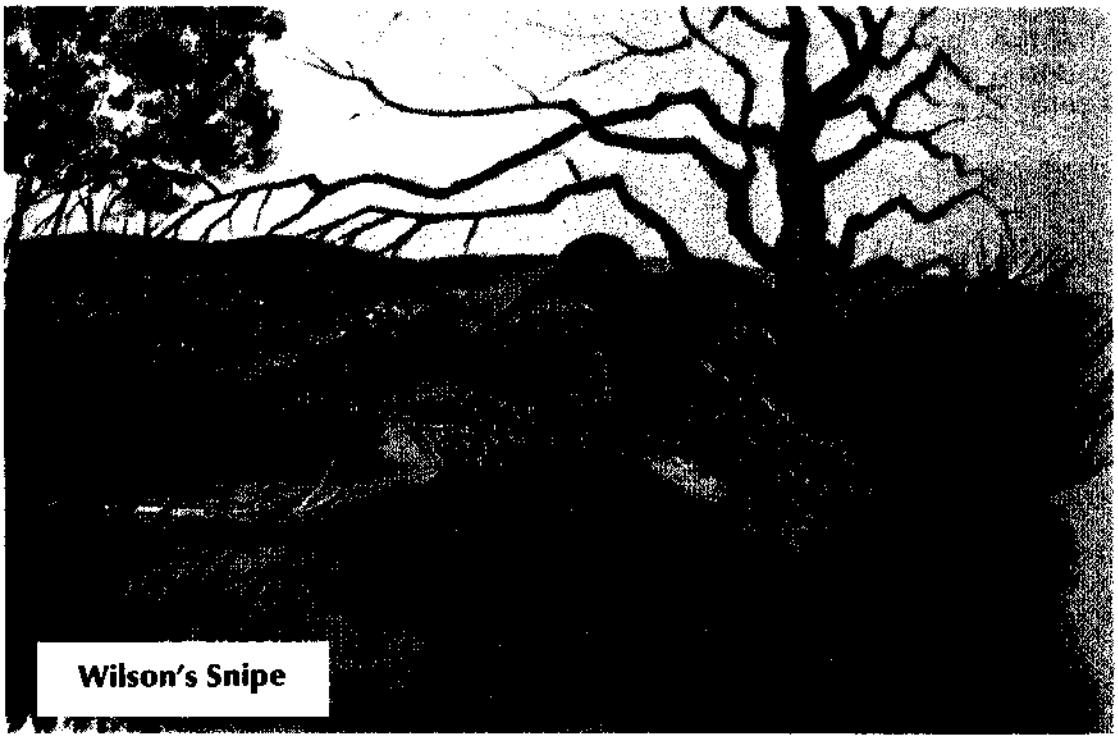
Wilson's Snipe

capella gallinago

(Length 10½-11½")

The migratory Wilson's snipe, or jacksnipe as some prefer, is not a true upland game bird, but since it does occur in some areas where quail and pheasant are found this sporty game bird has been included with Washington's traditional upland game species.

The snipe belongs to the sandpiper family and is a wading, or shorebird. It is the West's version of that classic eastern gamebird, the woodcock. In fact, these two birds greatly resemble each other. With a primary diet of earthworms, the snipe can usually be found in wet pastures, cattail swamps and along riverbottoms in both eastern and western Washington. Although few people hunt specifically for jacksnipe, many are harvested each year in conjunction with upland and waterfowl hunting.



Wilson's Snipe

The snipe is a tricky target as its darting, weaving escape tactics test the sharpest of wingshots. A distinctive call when flushed helps identification. The snipe is about quail size, has a brown body, long legs and a long, probing bill. Sexes are similar in appearance.

Band-tailed Pigeon

Columba fasciata

(Length 14-15½")

Another popular resident and migratory Washington game bird is the band-tailed pigeon, found mainly in western Washington. It is a grayish bird the size of a crow, with a pale broad band across the end of the fanlike tail. It also shows a white crescent on the back of the neck and has yellow legs and bill. Similarly-colored domestic pigeons have red feet.

The bird is generally found in wooded areas of western Washington associated with coniferous and hardwood forests. A few birds may also be found on the east slope of the Cascades, mainly near Cle Elum.

Bandtails usually arrive in the state sometime in March and April, with nesting beginning soon after. Nests are built in trees similar to doves, with one or two eggs laid. Hatching may occur anytime from May through July. As with doves, there are indications that more than one brood occurs per pair of adults.

Band-tailed Pigeon

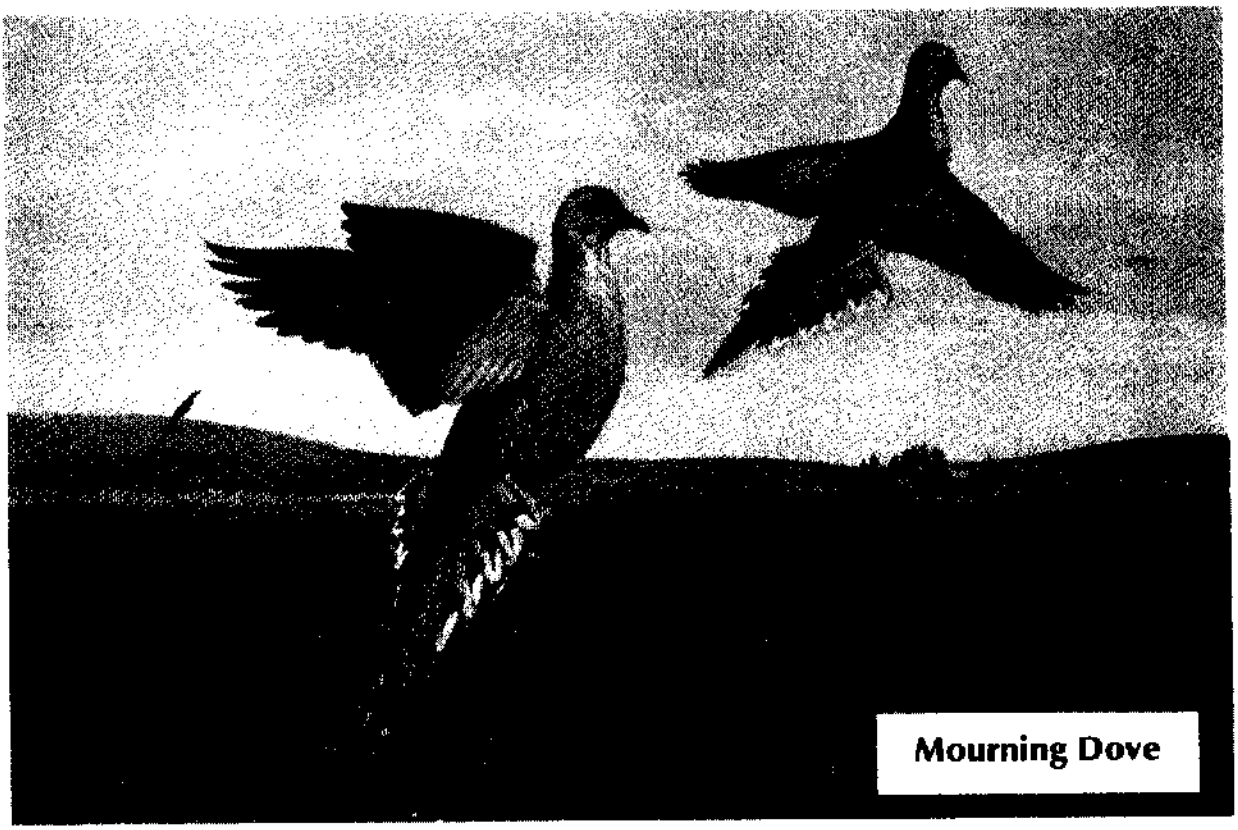
Migrating birds are associated with mineral springs in the fall, as the autumn migrations start in August and September. Wintering occurs in Oregon and California, although some may be found in southern Puget Sound and southwest Washington during this period.

Mourning Dove

Zenaidura macroura

(Length 11-13")

A popular resident and migratory game bird, this feathered speedster is found statewide, but is especially plentiful in the Okanogan and Yakima valleys. The dove is a migratory upland game bird, but fair-sized wintering populations can be found in the Yakima valley and lower elevations of the Snake River and its tributaries. For the most part, however, mourning doves rear their young—sometimes up to four broods of two each—and leave Washington each year by the middle of September or earlier.



Mourning Dove

Doves are most common in farmland areas where grainfields and orchards are adjacent. Most everyone has seen a mourning dove sitting on a telephone wire, one of its favorite perches. Built for speed, the dove is streamlined in shape with long pointed wings and a long tail. Its blue-gray color seems iridescent, taking on beautiful pastel hues in the sunlight. Sexes are similar in appearance.

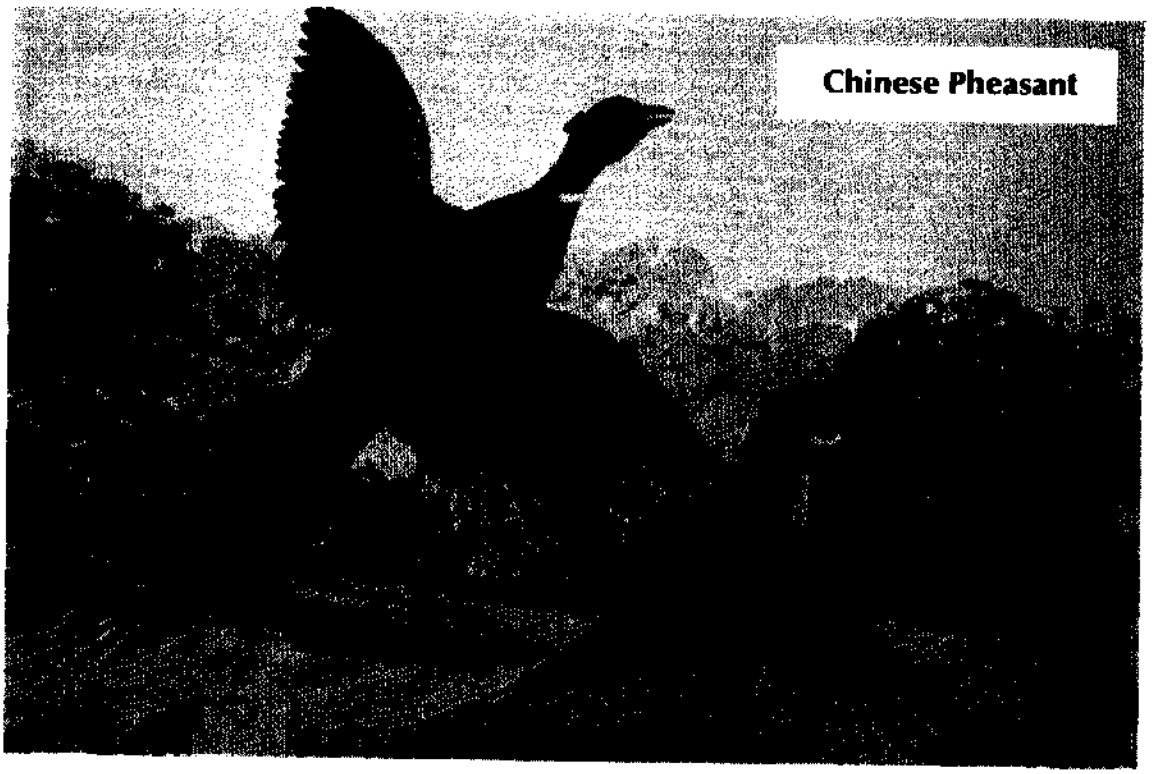
INTRODUCED SPECIES

Chinese (Ring-necked) Pheasant

Phasianus colchicus

(Length, male 30-36"

The best known, and most popular, Washington upland game bird is the Chinese pheasant. The male is easily recognized by its white collar, greenish-blue rump and long, sweeping tail. The female is smaller and brown colored; it has a shorter, pointed tail.



Chinese Pheasant

According to Shaw, in the 1908 publication of *The China, or Denny Pheasant in Oregon,* this bird was first brought to America in 1880 through the efforts of Judge O. N. Denny, then Counsul General to Shanghai. Judge Denny shipped 70 Chinese pheasants to his brother, John Denny, who lived in the Willamette valley, east of Corvallis, Oregon. Only 7 or 8 of these birds survived the long overseas clippership voyage. Later, they all died. In 1881 the Judge shipped 30 more pheasants; 26 arrived in good condition and were liberated by John Denny at the foot of Peterson's Butte, near the family home. Shortly after this, the Oregon legislature enacted a law protecting the "Denny" pheasant for a period of five years.

In 1883 a third shipment of 90 birds arrived from Judge Denny consisting mostly of silver and copper pheasants, but also the Chinese variety. This last shipment arrived in excellent condition and at least part of them were released on Protection Island, near Port Townsend, Washington. These pheasants seemed to thrive on this remote island and the Chinese, at least, became abundant there. Today, Protection Island has been "developed" for recreation and its pheasant population has virtually disappeared.

These importations, followed by many others in later years, were the nucleus of Chinese pheasant populations now in huntable numbers throughout most of northern and western United States.

A Chinese variety, the "Sand Point" pheasant, has been propagated on western Washington game farms and released at all public shooting areas and on suitable habitat in the Puget Sound region. The variety was originally discovered on the Sand Point Naval Air Station in Seattle. It subsists on a diet of green vegetation and weed seeds, and does not depend upon cereal grains to survive as do pheasants of eastern Washington.

Several years ago the Washington Game Bird Club imported a shipment of "pure strain" Chinese pheasants for propagation in eastern Washington game farms. These pheasants have a bluer rump patch and seem to hold tighter for a pointing dog. They are presently being released throughout eastern Washington.

Japanese Green Pheasant

Phasianus versicolor

(Length, male 34")

The Japanese green pheasant is a common resident of northern Japan. It is found at elevations up to 3,500 feet on hilly woodlands, and is commonly associated with agriculture; however, this bird is not as dependent on grain as is the Chinese.

Cocks have a green crown, blue throat and purplish neck. The back and rump are green, while other parts are shades of olive and brown. The female is more strongly mottled in blacks, browns and greens.

The Cowlitz River valley, in Lewis County, was selected as the primary release site for green pheasants. They have reproduced successfully in the wild for several years, but tend to interbreed with established ringneck populations. These ringneck-green crosses, however, may prove to be a game bird better suited to western Washington's climate than either the pure Chinese or Japanese green strains.

Valley Quail

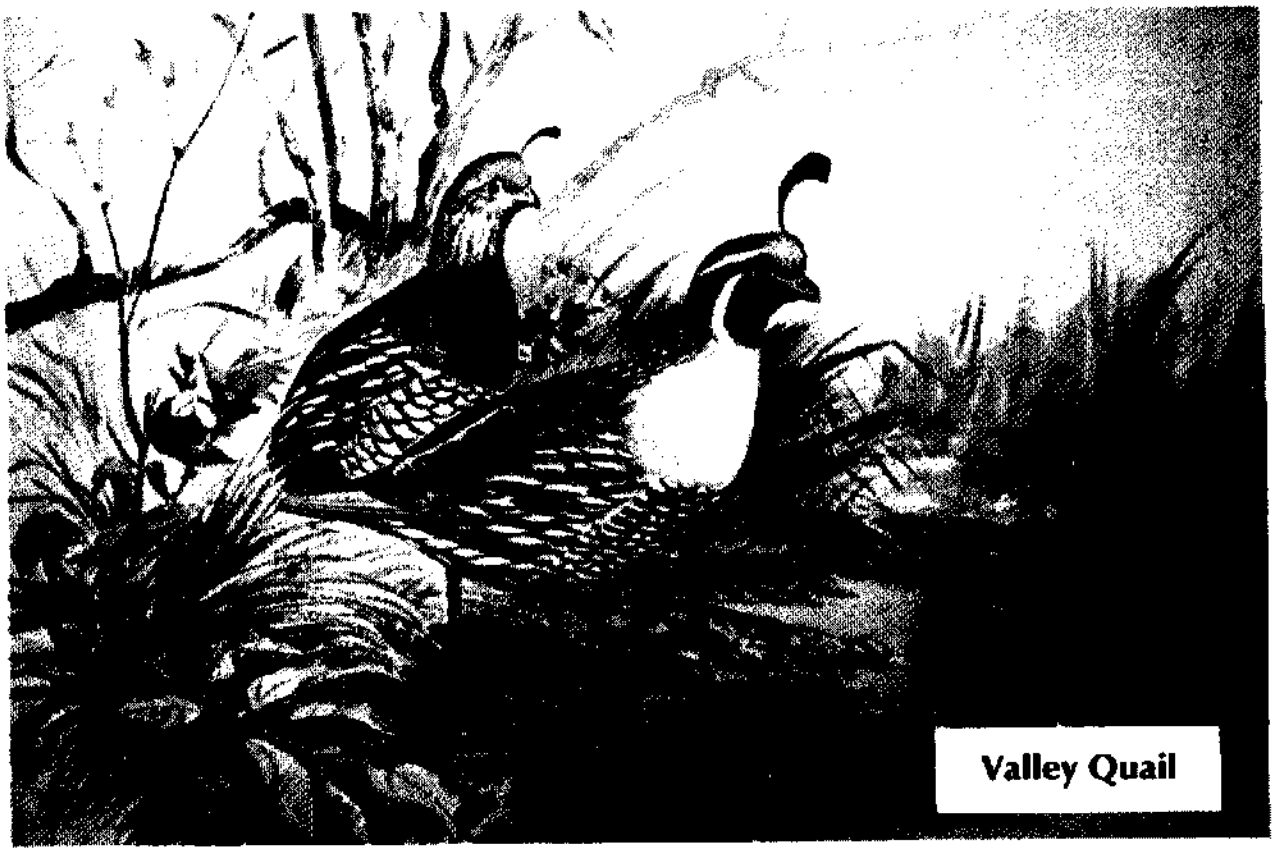
Lophortyx californicus

(Length 9½-11")

Washington's quail family includes valley, mountain, Gambel's, scaled and bobwhite species.

Valley quail are found throughout agricultural, semi-agricultural and residential areas of Washington on both sides of the Cascades. It is the most abundant member of the quail family in this state. It is most numerous in eastern Washington farming regions adjacent to brushy draws and riverbottoms. The Yakima valley, Okanogan valley and farming country of the Snake River and its drainages contain most of the state's quail.

Long a favorite of many upland bird hunters, the valley quail is a striking bird. The male is blue-gray and brown in body color and has a wide necklace of black and white spots. Most distinctive feature of the cock is a long, forward-curving topknot which is actually made up of several feathers. The female has more brown tones and a smaller, straighter topknot.



Mountain Quail

Oreortyx pictus

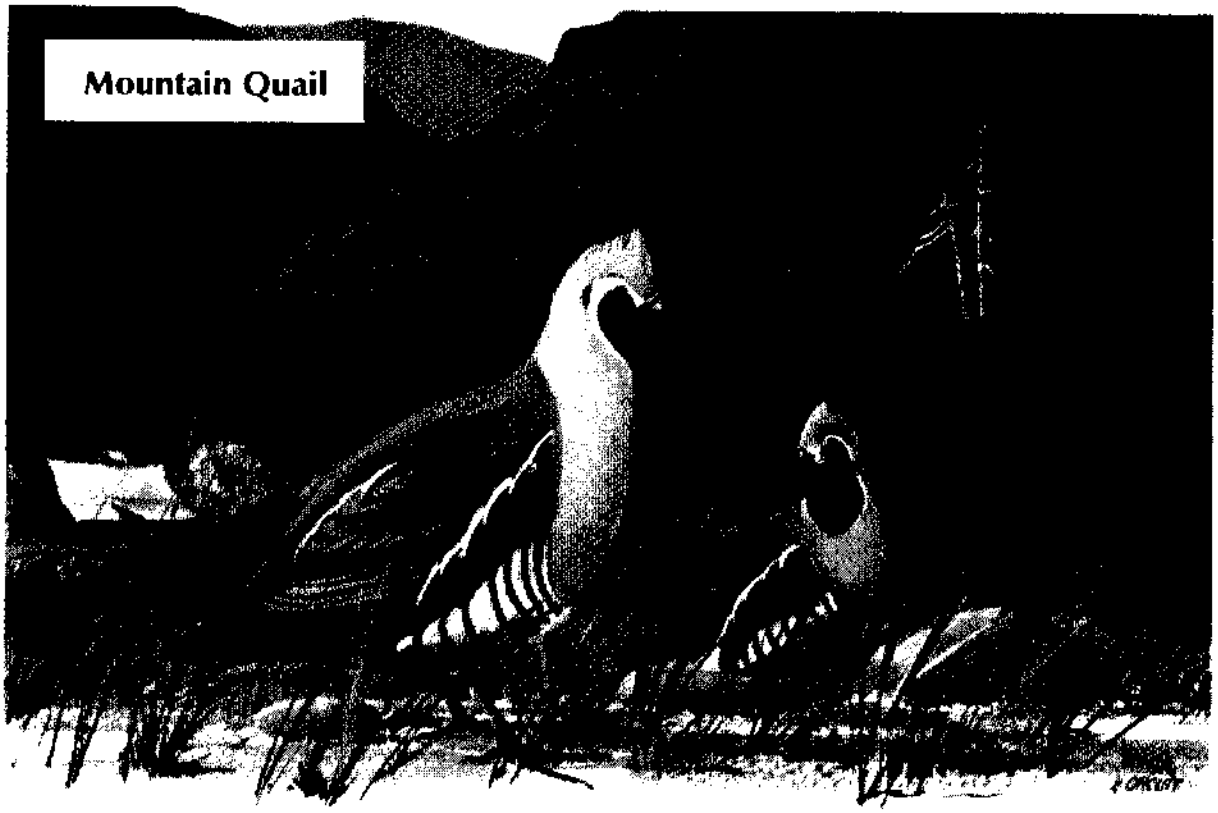
(Length 10½-12")

The mountain quail is the largest member of the quail family. In Washington it is now found in logged off areas of Kitsap, Thurston and Pierce counties on the westside, and in the river drainages of southeast Washington.

Mountain quail can easily be distinguished by a long straight, backward pointing plume on the head and vertical barring on the sides similar to chukars. Sexes are nearly identical in appearance. Coveys seldom reach more than a dozen in number.

Some ornithologists believe the mountain quail to be the genetic link between the Old World partridges and the New World quail. Although the mountain quail superficially resembles the chukar partridge, quail were found originally in North America and partridge in Europe and Asia.

The use of wildlife "guzzlers" in arid portions of Eastern Washington has greatly increased upland bird populations, as well as many non-game species. Here, young chukars are utilizing an artificial watering hole which has been established where no water previously was available.



Hungarian Partridge

Perdix perdix

(Length 12-13")

The four types of wild partridge found in Washington are all importees from other lands and include the Hungarian, chukar, French red-legged and bamboo. The Hun, or European gray partridge, was brought to America prior to 1879 and released in New Jersey. Later transplants were made throughout the United States with good success, especially in the western plains and prairie country.

First attempts to introduce the Hun into Washington were made in 1897, but were unsuccessful. A large scale release was made near Spokane in 1906, but it too was unsuccessful. Later transplants did take and during the early 1900's there were huntable numbers on both sides of the Cascades. In fact, at one time, western Skagit and Whatcom counties and southern Thurston county held very large populations when those regions consisted of predominantly small, grain-raising farms.

Today the Hun can be found in western Washington only in areas of prairie grasslands where flocks are small and scattered. In eastern Washington, however, large populations of Huns exist, especially along grassy benches bordering wheat fields in Whitman, Garfield, Columbia and Asotin counties.

The Hungarian partridge is a plump gray and tan bird with a reddish brown tail. Underparts are gray. The male sports a black horseshoe on the abdominal region. The female has slightly duller tones.

Hungarian Partridge

Chukar Partridge

Alectoris graeca

(Length 13-14")

The chukar partridge is native to Asia, Egypt and southern Europe. The species found in Washington is a result of reproduction from only four pairs received from California in the early 1930's. Like the Hun, some previous attempts had been made to make the chukar a Washington resident, but these were unsuccessful. The four pairs, then at the Tacoma Game Farm, were taken to Ellensburg and served as broodstock. In 1938 the first game farm chukars were released in the Yakima Canyon between Ellensburg and Yakima. During the interim between 1938 and 1942, 3,962 birds were raised at the now discontinued State game farm near Wapato for release. Many Game Department officials thought the chukar was a certain failure, as releases made during the World War II years did not seem to take. But shortly after the war's end, the Yakima canyon rang with the chukar's raucous call and a new game bird had found a permanent home.

Today the chukar is a highly-prized game bird in Washington, found principally along the Columbia, Okanogan, Snake, Yakima, Palouse and Grande Ronde river breaks. It is also found in nearly all arid drainages of these larger river systems. Long seasons, liberal bag limits and the chukar's preference for generally non-posted country now have the chukar rivaling the pheasant in hunting popularity.

The chukar is an easy bird to identify. Both sexes have a similar appearance. About crow-sized or slightly smaller, its body is slate gray. The chukar sports a black line through the eye down the neck, bordering a black V-shaped vest outlined in white. It has a dull red bill and legs. Its flanks are barred with about a dozen black stripes.

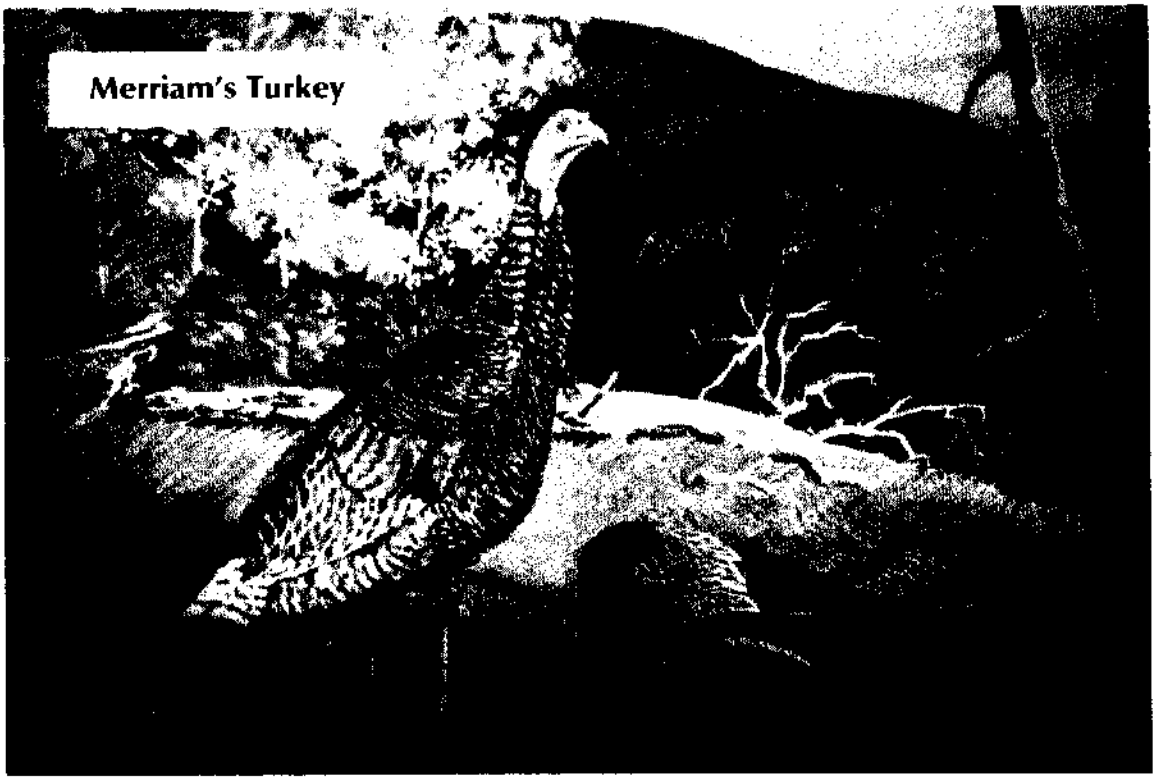
Merriam's Turkey

Meleagris gallopavo merriami

(Length, male 48")

Another popular game bird in Washington is the Merriam's wild turkey. Spring and fall seasons are held annually and it is the only game bird for which a special tag is required to hunt. Annual fall seasons were first established in 1965 and a spring gobbler season was first held in 1970.

Many previous attempts had been made to introduce the wild turkey into Washington, mostly with the eastern variety and all without widespread success. In 1960 and 1961, however, the Merriam's subspecies was introduced from Arizona and New Mexico into Yakima, Stevens and Klickitat counties. Wild turkey populations are now considered to be stable in about fifteen eastern Washington counties, and expanding in five western Washington counties.



Bagging a turkey is no easy task. An especially wary bird, the wild turkey has been described as a "shy, rangy, long-legged bird" that "sneak through cover like a true wild game species." Although toms can be called to the hunter in spring and fall, a successful hunt requires a skillful, patient and knowledgeable woodsman to get his bird.

The Merriam's turkey differs from its domestic cousin by lighter build, less weight, longer neck and legs, smaller and flatter head, and jet-black body feathers in the male. Main plumage differences in the Merriam's variety, from it eastern cousin, are white to cream colored tips on tail and rump feathers, and an ability to exist on a wider range of food.

OTHER EXOTIC SPECIES

Many exotic species have been introduced into Washington with little or no success. Those species that have shown similar requirements to Washington habitat have been raised on the state's game farms and released. Most of these have been dropped from the exotic game bird program. The Chilean Tinamou is the most recent exotic which has shown some degree of success and will probably be the last exotic to be introduced into the state, due to importation bans and lack of Department funding.

Chilean Tinamou

Nothoprocta perdicaria sanborni

(Length 10-12")

Chilean Tinamou

One of the newest exotic imports, the Chilean tinamou, is now resident in some locations of Washington. A plant of 95 was made in Clark County in 1971 from which some reproduction did occur during the summer of 1972. Numerous other plants have been made in recent years in hopefully suitable western Washington habitat.

Resembling partridge and quail, the tinamou actually belongs to the ostrich group. The bird is basically a grassland inhabitant, thriving in pasturelands or vineyards where there is good grass or weed understory. It is not dependent on agriculture, taking normally only weed seeds or insects from grain areas.

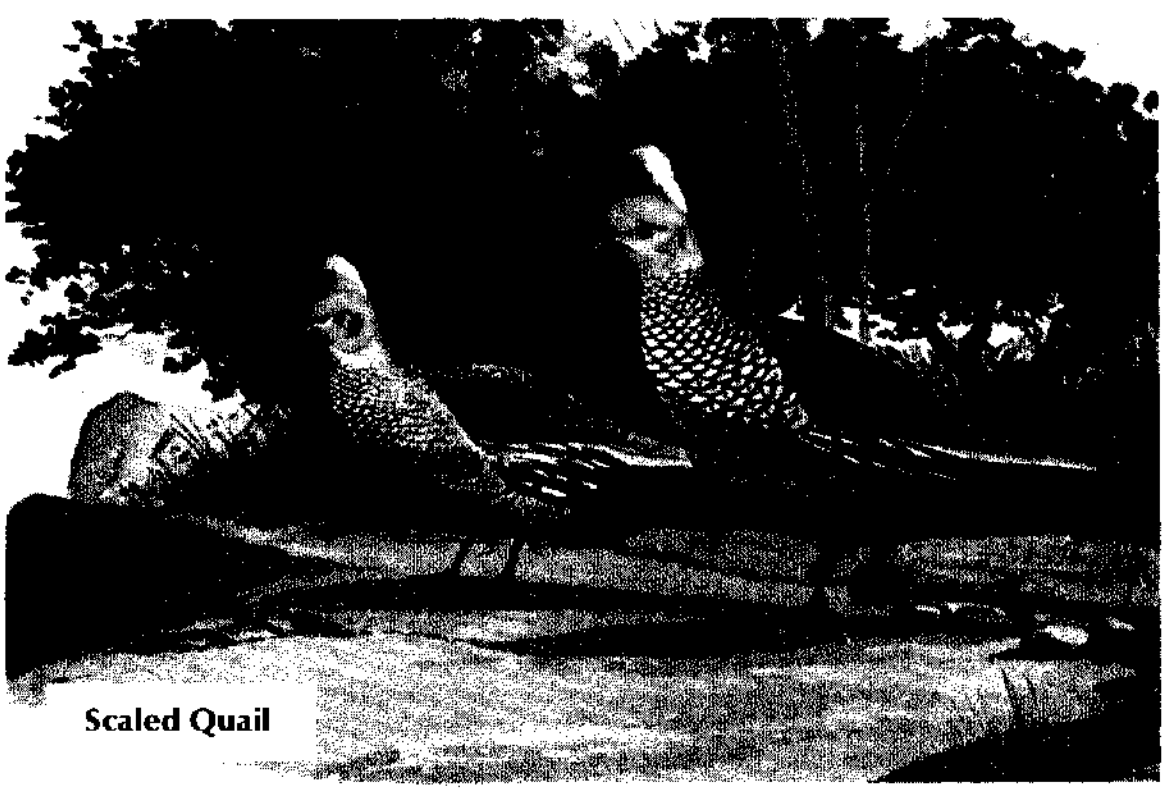
No other native North American bird looks like the tinamou. In appearance, this South American resident is round, has a very short tail, short legs, a long slender beak and its plumage is striated gray-brown or cloudy gray in color. When excited, the tinamou can erect elongated crownfeathers.

Scaled Quail

Callipepla squamata

(Length 9½-11")

Another quail species of Washington is the scaled quail, also known as "cottontop." It prefers the driest parts of eastern Washington and small, highly scattered flocks still exist in the Hanford area, extreme eastern portions of the Yakima Firing Center, and the Potholes country of Grant County.



Scaled Quail

In keeping with its name, the scaled quail gives the appearance of heavy scaling or barring on the sides, underparts, neck and upper back. It sports a white crest rather than a topknot, hence its nickname.

Chinese Bamboo Partridge

Bambusicola thoracica thoracica

(Length 10-11")

Another oriental import is the bamboo partridge. It was repeatedly introduced in Washington since 1920, but like the redleg, has never taken widespread hold. Bamboo partridge have been harvested in limited numbers along the Yakima River near Grandview in recent years, indicating reproduction in at least this one area.

The bamboo is shaped somewhat like a bobwhite quail, slightly larger and brownish in overall color. It is a pretty bird with tones of mottled olive brown above, buff on the undersides, with bands of gray and chestnut on the breast.

Chinese Bamboo Partridge

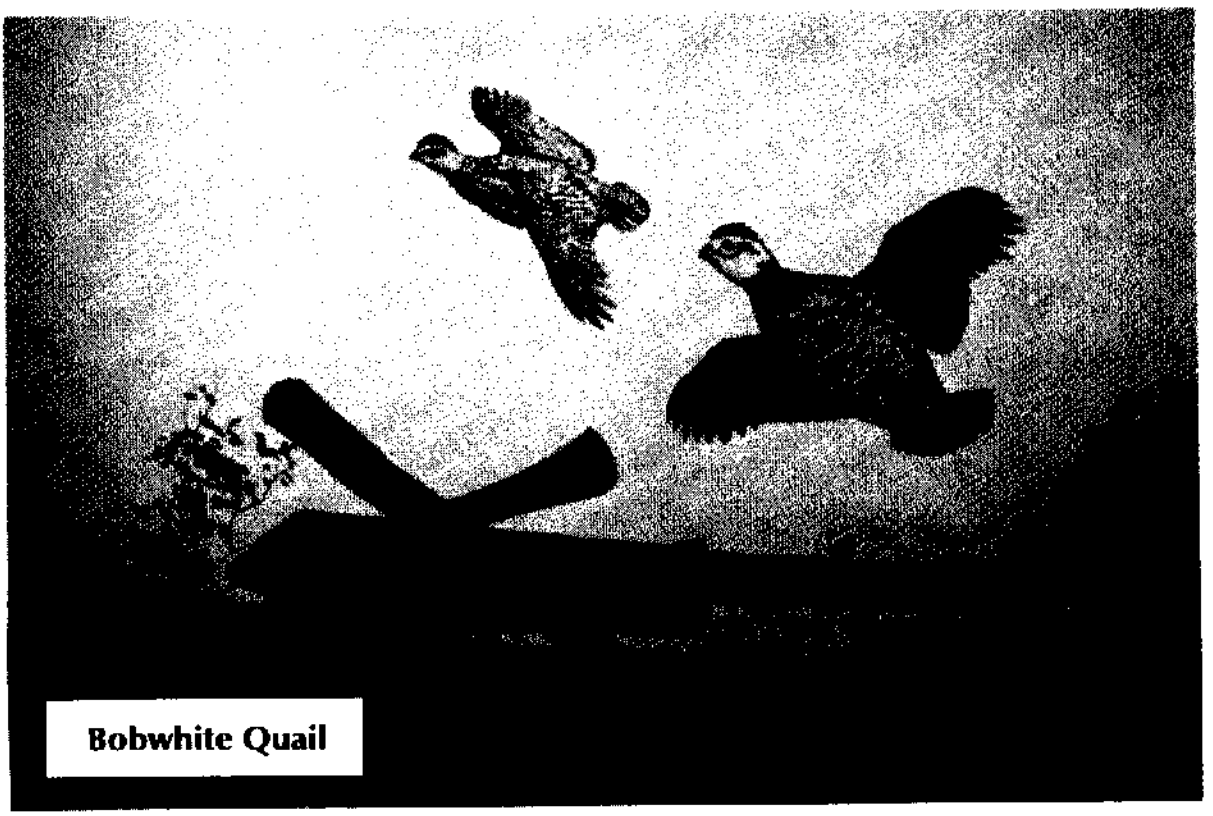
Flanks and belly are light with dark brown spots, while the throat, side of head and tail are shaded in rust. Unlike most pheasants, quail, as well as other members of the partridge family, the bamboo partridge often holds its tail upright, similar to a domestic chicken.

Bobwhite Quail

Colinus virginianus

(Length 8½-10½")

The bobwhite quail has been repeatedly introduced into our state for nearly one hundred years. Phillips (*Wild Birds Introduced or Transplanted in North America—1928*) states that the first of these introductions was made on Whidbey Island in 1871 by J. B. Montgomery. Later, 18 of the Whidbey Island quail were trapped and liberated in the Puyallup Valley.



Bobwhite Quail

L. H. Darwin, first Chief Game Warden for Washington, stated in 1933 that the three most popular upland birds in Washington, in order of importance, were the ringneck pheasant, Hungarian partridge and bobwhite quail. Prior to drastic changes in agricultural practices, the bob was very plentiful in the Yakima Valley, far outnumbering the now numerous valley quail. Today, wild bobwhites are only found in scattered coveys in the lower Yakima valley, southeastern Washington, and in some Puget Sound residential areas.

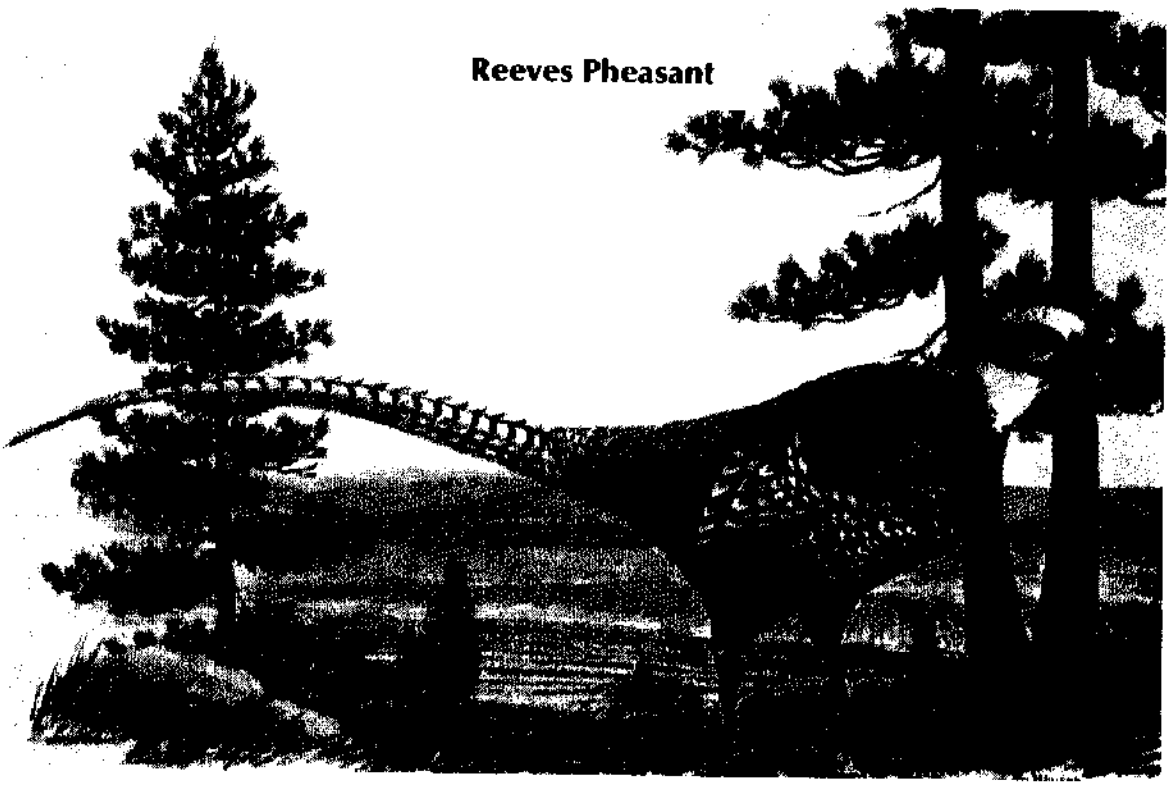
The bob is known for it distinctive call, a melodious "Bob-white", from which it derives its name. It has a rich brown color mottled with buff, black and white. Males have a white cheek patch and darker black heads, while females sport brown heads and buff cheek patches.

Reeves Pheasant

Syrmaticvs reevesi

(Length, male 48-85")

The spectacular Reeves pheasant, from China, has been introduced in many parts of Washington as well as almost in every other state. The Reeves was originally released in Yakima County in 1914, where the ringneck was just becoming an established resident.



This is a woods pheasant which prefers stands of uneven age timber, interspersed with occasional brushy or briary openings. Unlike the Chinese or Japanese green pheasants which roost in tall grass, the Reeves chooses tall trees in which to spend the night. Early release sites, however, did not correspond with the Reeves native habitat and all early attempts to establish the bird failed. Lately, however, biologists have made releases in areas more matching the Reeves native homeland.

Difficulty in establishing wild Reeves populations is attributed to present game farm stock being too "tame." Only certain areas in England have established wild populations, but with improving Chinese relations, perhaps someday it will be possible to obtain wild-trapped stock for release directly into suitable Washington habitat. To date, however, limited natural reproduction has occurred in the Spokane dryland pine country where most Reeves are released.

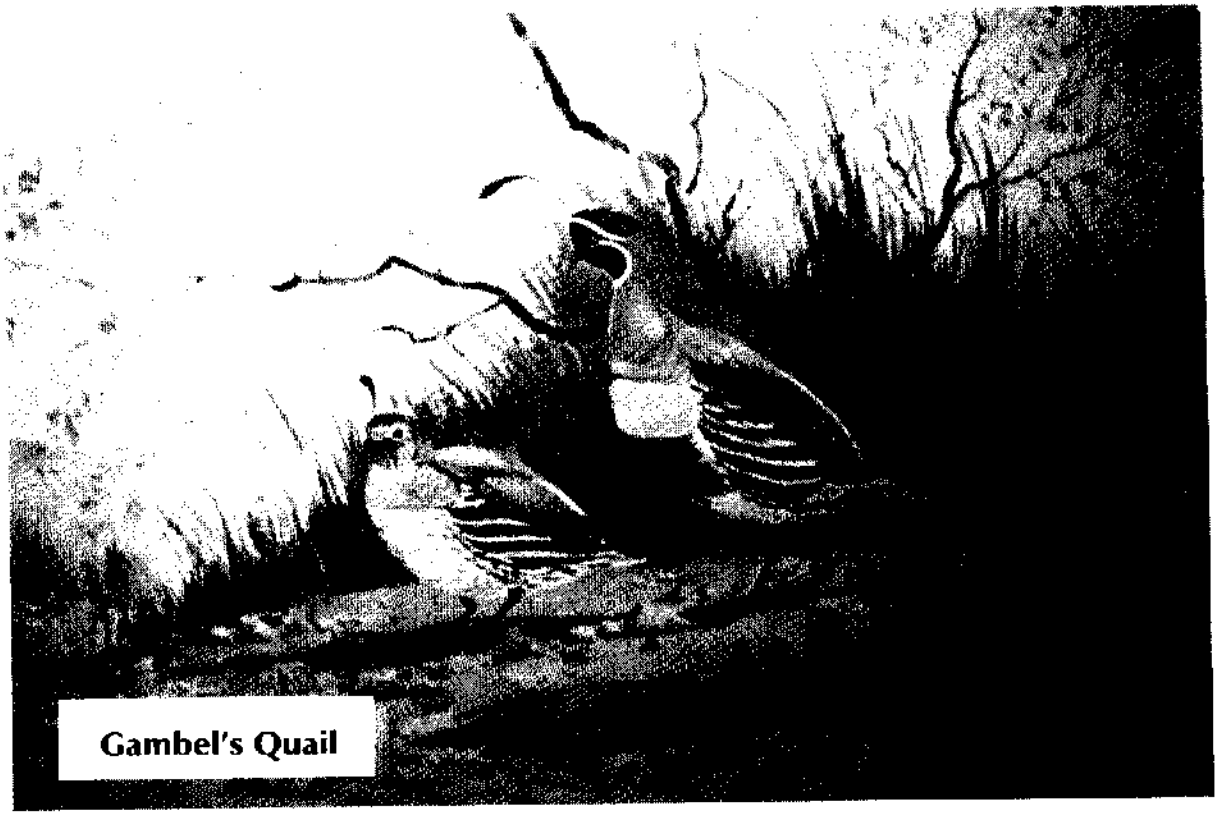
It is little wonder why most game agencies and private individuals have attempted to establish the Reeves's pheasant in the wild. The cock Reeves's is truly magnificent and is distinguished by his striking black and gold plumage, white head and with a black mask and band across the forehead, and six foot long gold and black tail. Vermiculated feathering of the smaller female is in black, brown and gray shades.

Gambel's Quail

Lophortyx gambelii

(Length 9½-11")

Gambel's quail have been introduced in Washington recently, from Nevada, to provide a game bird more tolerant to the vast stretches of sagebrush desert of eastern Washington. Present status of these transplants is uncertain, but recent reports indicate that small coveys may be taking hold in Priest Rapids area along the Columbia River.



Gambel's Quail

This quail can be mistaken for the more plentiful valley quail as they look very similar. The Gambel's, however, has a black belly patch and chestnut flanks broadly streaked with white in both sexes. And, unlike the valley quail, sexes of Gambel's appear similar.

White-crested Kalij Pheasant

Lophura levcomelana hamiltoni

(Length 34")

White-crested Kalij Pheasant

The white-crested kalij pheasant is native to the Himalaya mountains of India. Some trees and shrubs of its native home are represented by similar vegetation in western Washington. This pheasant prefers wooded areas and seems to seek places where there are openings or edges in lowland farming areas. It has been released mainly in the semi-wooded farming country of southwest Washington, but with no apparent wild reproduction to date.

In appearance, the male carries a long, thin crest of pale feathers which falls over the nape of its dark-colored neck. The body is glossy bluish-black with similar color variations in chest and breast feathers. The large, white crest on the male is ready identification. Females have a long head crest of dull brown and pale brown body plumage.

French Red-legged Partridge

Alectoris rufa rufa

(Length 13-14")

French Red-legged Partridge

French red-legged partridges were introduced on numerous occasions in Yakima and Kittitas counties during the late 1960's and early 1970's. However, only in the Kittitas valley have birds been known to winter through and produce young in the spring.

The redleg is slightly smaller than the chukar and similar in appearance. But while the chukar prefers steep, rocky slopes, the redleg likes diversified agricultural country. Redlegs can be distinguished from chukars by a sunburst necklace of black and white dashes. It too has a black stripe through the eye, but its flanks are barred with reddish brown stripes instead of the chukar's black. True to its name, the legs and bill are bright red in color.

STATE GAME FARMS

Modern hunting pressure has not adversely affected the existence of any game species. Upland birds, as well as waterfowl and game animals, can always live by the gun, but cannot compete with the plow. Hunting regulations today always assure that there will be adequate broodstock next year, but some current farming practices, widespread use of herbicides and loss of habitat by dam projects have been responsible for substantial losses in upland bird habitat throughout Washington.

Another and very important function of these farms is to propagate and stock new species of game birds that could add to the recreational hunting in the future.

To offset fluctuations caused by seasonal influences on nesting and inroads upon habitat area by agricultural operations, eight game farms are presently operated by the State Game Department. These are located throughout the state and their primary purpose is rearing additional game birds to augment wild stocks and for continuous research into possibilities of introducing new species.

Pheasants propagated provide some hunting in areas where natural production is very limited. They also serve as an insurance policy to re-stock any area that is severely depleted by a winter kill.

The first game farm was established in Walla Walla in 1918, and such propagation units have been operated continuously since that time. At the present there are eight game farms, distributed four in eastern Washington and four in western Washington.

WHIDBEY ISLAND GAME FARM is three miles east of Coupeville on State Highway 1D at Route 2, Box 371. This game farm supplies pheasants for release in northern Puget Sound and portions of the Olympic Peninsula.

ELLENSBURG GAME FARM is three miles north and east of Ellensburg at Route 3, Box 44, on Game Farm Road. This farm produces pheasants for release in Central and North Central Washington. Most released chukars in Eastern Washington are raised here.

KENNEWICK GAME FARM is located at Finley, eight miles south and east of Kennewick on Game Farm Road, Route 3, Box 2710. It produces Chinese ringneck pheasants for release primarily in South Central Washington.

LEWIS COUNTY GAME FARM is two miles west of Centralia at 3302 Mt. Vista Road. Pheasants from this farm are released in all Southwest Washington counties, as are experimental releases of white-crested kalij, which are also raised here.

SOUTH TACOMA GAME FARM is three miles south and west of Lakewood Center at 7801 Phillips Road, S.W., in Tacoma. Both Chinese ringneck and Japanese green pheasants are raised here for release in southern Puget Sound and portions of the Olympic and Kitsap peninsulas.

SPOKANE GAME FARM is at Deer Park, about five miles west and south of that town on Route 1, Box 109. Besides Chinese ringneck pheasants, this game farm raises a number of Hungarian and chukar partridge for release each year in Washington's far eastern counties.

Washington State
Department of Game
600 North Capitol Way
Olympia, Washington 98504
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